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A LINCOLN CORRESPONDENCE

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

WILLIAM H. LAMBERT



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A LINCOLN CORRESPONDENCE

TWENTY-TWO LETTERS OF HISTORICAL INTEREST HERE
PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY WILLIAM H. LAMBERT

Major Lambert is the owner of the original letters.

THESE letters of Abraham Lincoln are of interest not alone for their authorship, but also because they evidence the foresight, sagacity, honesty, and subordination of self to the cause of party or of country, characteristics which were dominant throughout his career and were eminently conspicuous during his Presidency.

Lyman Trumbull, to whom these letters were written, was, during the period covered by them, United States Senator from Illinois, his colleague in the Senate being Stephen A. Douglas. Trumbull was a native of Connecticut, born October 12, 1813. He had first gone to Georgia, where he taught school and studied law, subsequently removing to Illinois. While still a young man he became identified with public affairs in that State. He was successively a member of the legislature, Secretary of State, Judge of the Supreme Court, and in 1854 was elected representative in Congress.

Though a Democrat in politics, like many others of his party throughout the North he was strongly opposed to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, which was involved in the bill for the Territorial organization of Kansas and Nebraska, proposed and advocated by Senator Douglas, through whose efforts and influence it was enacted. So great was the defection in the Democratic party in the North because of the passage of the bill that in 1854, the year of its enactment, the opposition, comprising the "Free Soilers," the Whigs in greater part, and the "Anti-Nebraska" Democrats, triumphed over the

regular Democracy in the fall elections. In Illinois for the first time since the organization of the Democratic party it lost control of the legislature, and opportunity was given for the defeat of General James Shields, who sought reelection to the United States Senate at the expiration of his term in 1855.

The "Anti-Nebraska" majority in the joint session of the legislature was very small, and none of the constituent parties alone held control, but the Whigs were greatly preponderant, and they hoped and sought the election of their candidate, Abraham Lincoln. Lyman Trumbull was the candidate favored by the Anti-Nebraska Democrats, who numbered only five. On the first ballot Lincoln received 45 votes, Shields 41, Trumbull 5, and there were 8 scattering votes; in succeeding ballots Lincoln's vote fell to 15, Trumbull's rose to 35, and Shields having been withdrawn, Governor Matteson, who was substituted, received 47. The original supporters of Trumbull persistently declined to vote for Lincoln or for any Whig; the fifteen Whigs "would never desert Lincoln except by his direction." Perceiving the probability that protraction of the struggle would result in the election of Matteson, Lincoln decided upon action which is best described in his own language, quoted from his letter written February 9, 1855, to the Hon. E. B. Washburne, a member of Congress from Illinois. "So I determined to strike at once, and accordingly advised my remaining friends to go for him [Trumbull], which they did, and elected him on the tenth bal-

lot. Such is the way the thing was done. I think you would have done the same under the circumstances, though Judge Davis [subsequently Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and still later Senator from Illinois], who came down this morning, declares he never would have consented to the forty-seven men being controlled by the five. I regret my defeat moderately, but I am not nervous about it . . . and his [Matteson's] defeat now gives me more pleasure than my own gives me pain. On the whole, it is perhaps as well for our general cause that Trumbull is elected. The Nebraska men confess that they hate it worse than anything that could have happened. It is a great consolation to see them worse whipped than I am."

After events fully justified Lincoln's surmise, and even more. It was better that Trumbull was elected, for if Lincoln had been, it is not probable that he would have been chosen for the Presidency in 1860. His friends, however, were sorely disappointed by his defeat, and long cherished resentment and distrust of Trumbull, and of Judd, Cook, Palmer, Baker, and Allen, the five men whose adherence to Trumbull compelled his election. Lincoln was not animated by such feelings, and these men became his stanch friends and supporters, and were active in the formation of the Republican party, in which the several Anti-Nebraska factions were united. Norman B. Judd as Chairman of the Republican State Committee of Illinois was most effective in his advocacy of Lincoln's nomination for the Presidency. John M. Palmer achieved high distinction during the war of 1861-65, in which he attained the rank of major-general and the command of the 14th Army Corps. Later he was elected Governor of his State and United States Senator; and by his acceptance of the nomination as a candidate for the Presidency in 1896, he showed the same devotion to principle that led him to quit his party in 1854, when its action was repugnant to his sense of right.

On the 16th of June, 1858, the Republican State Convention unanimously named Lincoln as "the first and only choice of the Republicans of Illinois for the United States Senate as the successor of Stephen A. Douglas," who was seeking reelection;

and in the fall of that year occurred the memorable debate between the opposing candidates. Though Lincoln had the majority of the popular vote in the ensuing election, Douglas controlled the legislature and was reelected, a result due mainly to the system of apportionment of the legislative districts against which Lincoln frequently protested, and the rectification of which he considered of the utmost importance.

This second defeat of Lincoln's aspiration for the senatorship led his friends to doubt the loyalty of Trumbull and his supporters, who had been Democrats, and to look forward to the expiration of his senatorial term with intent to elect Lincoln in his stead. With this doubt and this purpose Lincoln had no sympathy, and he gave Trumbull assurance of his belief that the senator and his friends had heartily supported Lincoln in the recent contest, and further that he desired Trumbull's reelection, warning him, however, of the danger of affording Lincoln's friends any additional ground for suspicion of Trumbull's devotion to their leader.

The complications and controversies that resulted from the legislation for Kansas and the conduct of affairs there, led to antagonism between Senator Douglas and President Buchanan; Northern sympathy was largely with Douglas, and many Republicans outside of Illinois were disposed to favor his reelection to the Senate as an effectual rebuke to the administration. Among these was Horace Greeley, editor of the "New York Tribune," whose approval of Douglas aroused Lincoln's indignation. The plausible doctrine of "Popular Sovereignty" advocated by Douglas won the favor of many who had hitherto opposed him; but Lincoln saw the fallacy of the scheme and during the memorable debates denounced it vigorously, and in the Republican platform of 1860 the doctrine was declared "a deception and a fraud." In theory "Popular Sovereignty" claimed for the people of the Territories the same rights regarding slavery that were possessed by the States, while virtually, under the principles enunciated in the Dred Scott decision, the people could not exclude slavery.

Beyond a few notes the following letters (including two from Trumbull to Lincoln) require no further explanation.

"Springfield, June 7, 1856

"HON. LYMAN TRUMBULL

"My dear Sir: The news of Buchanan's nomination came yesterday; and a good many Whigs, of conservative feelings, and slight pro-slavery proclivities, withal, are inclining to go for him, and will do it, unless the Anti-Nebraska nomination shall be such as to divert them—The man to effect that object is Judge McLean; and his nomination would save every Whig, except such as have already gone over hook and line, as Singleton, Morrison, Constable, & others—J. T. Stuart, Anthony Thornton, James M. Davis (the old settler) and others like them, will heartily go for McLean,¹ but will every one go for Buchanan, as against Chase, Banks, Seward, Blair or Frémont—I think they would stand Blair or Frémont for Vice-President—but not more—

"Now there is a grave question to be considered. Nine tenths of the Anti-Nebraska votes have to come from old Whigs—In setting stakes, is it safe to totally disregard them? Can we possibly win, if we do so? So far they have been disregarded—I need not point out the instances—

"I think I may trust you to believe I do not say this on my own personal account—I am *in*, and shall go for any one nominated unless he be 'platformed' expressly, or impliedly, on some ground which I may think wrong—Since the nomination of Bissell² we are in good trim in Illinois, save at the point I have indicated—If we can save pretty nearly all the Whigs, we shall elect him, I think, by a very large majority—

"I address this to you, because your influence in the Anti-Nebraska nomination will be greater than that of any other Illinoisian [sic]—

"Let this be confidential,

"Yours very truly

"A. Lincoln."

"Springfield, Aug: 11. 1856

"HON: L. TRUMBULL:

"My dear Sir: I have just returned from speaking at Paris and Grandview in Edgar County—& Charleston and Shelby-

ville, in Coles and Shelby counties—Our whole trouble along there has been & is Fillmoreism—It loosened considerably during the week, not under my preaching, but under the election returns from Mo. Ky. Ark. & N. C. I think we shall ultimately get all the Fillmore men, who are really anti-slavery extension—the rest will probably go to Buchanan where they rightfully belong; if they do not, so much the better for us—The great difficulty with anti-slavery extension Fillmore men, is that they suppose Fillmore as good as Frémont on that question; and it is a delicate point to argue them out of it, they are so ready to think you are *abusing* Mr. Fillmore—

"Mr. Conkling showed me a letter of yours, from which I infer you will not be in Ills. till 11th Sept—

"But for that I was going to write you to make appointments at Paris, Charleston, Shelbyville, Hillsboro, &c—immediately after the adjournment—They were tolerably well satisfied with my work along there; but they believe with me, that you can touch some points that I can not; and they are very anxious to have you do it—

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln."

"Chicago, Nov. 30. 1857.

"HON: LYMAN TRUMBULL.

"Dear Sir: Herewith you find duplicates of a notice which I wish to be served upon the Miss. French, or now Mrs. Gray, who married the late Franklin C. Gray—You understand what person I mean—Please hand her one copy, and note on the other that you have done so, the date of service, and your signature & return it to me at Springfield—

"What think you of the probable 'rumpus' among the Democracy over the Kansas Constitution? I think the Republicans should stand clear of it—In their view both the President and Douglas are wrong; and they should not espouse the cause of either, because they may consider the other a little the farther wrong of the two—From what I am told here, Douglas tried, before leaving, to draw off some Republicans on this dodge,

¹ Judge John McLean, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. With Justice Curtis he dissented from the majority of the court in the Dred Scott decision.

² William H. Bissell, Colonel 2d Illinois Regiment in the War with Mexico, member of Congress, Governor 1857–60.

and even succeeded in making some impression on one or two—

"Yours very truly,

"A. Lincoln—"

"*Springfield, Dec. 18. 1857*

"HON: L. TRUMBULL:

"*Dear Sir:* Yours of the 7th telling me that Mrs. Gray is in Washington, reached [me] last night—

"Herewith I return the notices which I will thank you to serve and return as before requested—

"This notice is not required by law; and I am giving it merely because I think *fairness* requires it—

"Nearly all the Democrats here stick to Douglas; but they are hobbling along with the idea that there is no split between him and Buchanan—Accordingly they indulge the most extravagant eulogies on B., & his message; and insist that he has not indorsed the Lecompton Constitution—

"I wish not to tax your time; but when you return the notice, I shall be glad to have your general view of the then present aspect of affairs—

"Yours very truly

"A. Lincoln"

"*Bloomington, Dec. 28. 1857—*

"HON. LYMAN TRUMBULL.

"*Dear Sir:* What does the 'New York Tribune' mean by its constant eulogising, and admiring, and magnifying Douglas? Does it, in this, speak the sentiments of the Republicans at Washington? Have they concluded that the Republican cause, generally, can be best promoted by sacrificing us here in Illinois? If so we would like to know it soon; it will save us a great deal of labor to surrender at once—

"As yet I have heard of no Republican here going over to Douglas; but if the 'Tribune' continues to din his praises into the ears of its five or ten thousand Republican readers in Illinois, it is more than can be hoped that all will stand firm—

"I am not complaining—I only wish a fair understanding— Please write me at Springfield—

"Your Obt Servt.

"A. Lincoln—"

"*Springfield, June 23, 1858*

"HON. LYMAN TRUMBULL

"*My dear Sir:* Your letter of the 16th reached me only yesterday— We had already seen, by telegraph, a report of Douglas' general onslaught upon every body but himself— I have this morning seen the 'Washington Union,' in which I think the Judge is rather worsted in regard to that onslaught—

"In relation to the charge of an alliance between the Republicans and Buchanan men in this State, if being rather pleased to see a division in the ranks of the Democracy, and not doing anything to prevent it, be such alliance, then there is such alliance—at least that is true of me —But if it be intended to charge that there is any alliance by which there is to be any concession of principle on either side, or furnishing of the sinews, or partition of offices, or swopping of votes, to any extent; or the doing of anything, great or small, on the one side, for a consideration, express or implied, on the other, no such thing is true so far as I know or believe—

"Before this reaches you, you will have seen the proceedings of our Republican State Convention— It was really a grand affair, and was, in all respects, all that our friends could desire—

"The resolution in effect nominating me for Senator I suppose was passed more for the object of closing down upon this everlasting croaking about Wentworth¹ than anything else—

"The signs look reasonably well— Our State ticket, I think, will be elected without much difficulty— But, with the advantages they have of us, we shall be very hard run to carry the Legislature—

"We shall greet your return home with great pleasure—

"Yours very truly

"A. Lincoln."

"*Springfield, Jan'y 29. 1859*

"HON: L. TRUMBULL

"*Dear Sir:* I have just received your late speech, in pamphlet form, sent me by yourself— I had seen, and read it, before, in a newspaper; and I really think it is a capital one—

"When you can find leisure, write me

¹ Wentworth familiarly known as "Long John" because of his height—six feet, seven inches. Journalist, member of Congress 1843-51, 1853-55, 1865-67; Mayor of Chicago in 1857, and again in 1860.

your present impressions of Douglas' movements— Our friends here from different parts of the State, in and out of the Legislature, are united, resolute, and determined; and I think it is almost certain that we shall be far better organized for 1860 than ever before—

"We shall get no just apportionment; and the best we can do, (if we can even do that) is to prevent one being made worse than the present—

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln—"

Washington, Jan'y. 28, 1859.

HON. A. LINCOLN,

My Dear Sir, I have been shown the copy of an article said to have been prepared by Col. John Wentworth for publication in the "Chicago Journal," the object of which evidently is to stir up bad feeling between Republicans who were formerly Whigs & those who were Democrats, & more especially to create prejudice against myself & the Democratic portion of the party— The article is an insidious one & well calculated to do mischief with those who do not understand facts as well as you & I do— It contains a number of statements utterly false but mixed up with others which are true & so colored as to give an entirely wrong impression to the uninformed reader— The article professes to be a justification by Charles Wilson. Esq. for having nominated you as a candidate for Senator in the Republican Convention, but this is a mere pretense to get at something else— It seems that Wilson refused to publish the article, but the substance of it will probably be published in some way by its author—

I hope you have seen it, if not I will furnish you a copy. It is a despicably mean thing and just such an act as it would take a man of Wentworth [sic] reputed character to be guilty of— I never had much to do with Wentworth & really know personally but little about him, but it is right that friends like you & I should not permit any person whatever his motive to stir up unfounded suspicions & bad feelings between our friends, & to prevent it effectually it is only necessary that we see they are not imposed upon by designing mischief making persons. It needs no assurance from me, to satisfy you of the entire good faith with which Messrs. Judd, Cook, & others as well as myself who are assailed in this article worked for your

success in the late canvass— I am so constituted as to be incapable of practicing disguise & deceit if I would & now write you with that frankness & candor which is so characteristic of your course towards everybody.

The Democracy here are very much demoralized & broken down. They are attempting to get up a new issue on the Cuba question. What think you of that matter? Of course we Republicans can never consent to putting thirty millions in the hands of Buchanan in the present state of things, but can our opponents gain anything by the attempt which they will make to put themselves for & us against the acquisition of Cuba— I am inclined not to place myself against Cuba under any & all contingencies, but against this foolish, & unjust attempt to acquire her at this time— Douglas looks badly & is not the big man in the Senate he was two years ago— The Fitch¹ matter I think has damaged him with the shoulder hitters & [rowdies ?]² his chief supporters—

Truly yours

L. Trumbull.

"Springfield, Feb. 3. 1859

"HON. L. TRUMBULL

"My dear Sir: Yours of the 29th is received— The article mentioned by you, prepared for the 'Chicago Journal,' I have not seen; nor do I wish to see it, though I heard of it a month, or more, ago— Any effort to put enmity between you and me, is as idle as the wind— I do not for a moment doubt that you, Judd, Cook, Palmer, and the Republicans generally, coming from the old Democratic ranks, were as sincerely anxious for my success in the late contest, as I myself, and the old Whig Republicans were— And I beg to assure you, beyond all possible cavil, that you can scarcely be more anxious to be sustained two years hence than I am that you shall be so sustained— I can not conceive it possible for me to be a rival of yours, or to take sides against you in favor of any rival— Nor do I think there is much danger of the old Democratic and Whig elements of our party breaking into opposing factions— They certainly shall not, if I can prevent it.

"I do not perceive that there is any feeling here about Cuba; and so I think, you can safely venture to act upon your

¹ Graham N. Fitch, Senator from Indiana, a Democrat opposed to Douglas.

² Uncertain as to this word.

own judgment upon any phase of it which may be presented—

"The H. R.¹ passed an apportionment bill yesterday—slightly better for [us] than the present in the Senate districts; but perfectly outrageous in the H. R. districts— It can be defeated without any revolutionary movement, unless the session be prolonged.

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln"

"Springfield, Nov. 28, 1859

"HON. L. TRUMBULL.

"My dear Sir: Yours of the 23rd is received— I agree with you entirely about the contemplated election of Forney²— Nothing could be more short-sighted than to place so strong a man as Forney in position to keep Douglas on foot— I know nothing of Forney personally; but I would put no man in position to help our enemies in the point of our hardest strain—

"There is nothing new here— I have written merely to give my view about this Forney business.

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln"

"Springfield, Dec. 25, 1859

"HON. LYMAN TRUMBULL

"Dear Sir: About the 15th by direction of Mr. Judd, I sent a letter and inclosures to him, addressed to your care; and I have not yet learned whether he received it—

"I have carefully read your speech; and I judge that, by the interruptions, it came out a much better speech than you expected to make when you began— It really is an excellent one, many of the points being most admirably made—

"I was in the inside of the Post-Office last evening when a mail came bringing a considerable number of your documents; and the Post-Master said to me 'These will be put in the boxes, and half will never be called for; If Trumbull would send them to me I would distribute a hundred to where he will get ten distributed this way'—

"I said, 'shall I write this to Trumbull?'— He replied 'If you choose you may'— I believe he was sincere; but you will judge of that for yourself—

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln"

"Springfield, Mar. 16, 1860

"HON: L. TRUMBULL

"My dear Sir: When I first saw by the despatches that Douglas had run from the Senate while you were speaking I did not quite understand it; but seeing by the report that you were cramming down his throat that infernal stereotyped lie of his about 'negro equality' the thing became plain—

"Another matter— Our friend Delahay³ wants to be one of the Senators from Kansas— Certainly it is not for outsiders to obtrude their interference— Delahay has suffered a great deal in our cause, and been very faithful to it, as I understand— He writes me that some of the members of the Kansas Legislature have written you in a way that your simple answer might help him— I wish you would consider whether you can not assist him that far, without impropriety— I know it is a delicate matter; and I do not wish to press you beyond your own judgment—

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln—"

"Chicago, March 26, 1860

"HON: L. TRUMBULL

"My dear Sir: They are having a desperate struggle in Connecticut⁴; and it would both please, and help our friends there, if you could be with them in the last days of the fight— Having been there, I know they are proud of you as a son of their own soil, and would be moved to greater exertion by your presence among them—

"Can you not go? Telegraph them, and go right along— The fiendish attempt now being made upon Connecticut, must not be allowed to succeed,

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln"

¹ House of Representatives of the Illinois legislature.

² John W. Forney strenuously supported Douglas in his opposition to the Kansas policy of President Buchanan, was clerk of the National House of Representatives in 1851-55, and again in 1859. He became an ardent

Republican and was Secretary of the Senate in 1861-68.

³ Mark W. Delahay, later United States District Judge.

⁴ After his speech at the Cooper Institute, February 27, 1860, Lincoln spent several days in Connecticut.

"Springfield, Ills. April 7, 1860

"HON: L. TRUMBULL

"My dear Sir: Reaching home from Chicago, where I have been engaged two weeks in the trial of a lawsuit, I found your letter of March 26th.

"Of course you can do no better for Delahay than you promise— I am trying to keep out of the contest among our friends for the Gubernatorial nomination; but from what I hear, the result is in considerable doubt—

"We have just had a clear party victory in our City election; and our friends are more encouraged, and our enemies more cowed by it, than by anything since the organization of the Republican party—Last year we carried the city; but we did it, not by our own strength, but by an open feud among our enemies— This year their feud was healed; and we beat them fairly by main strength—

"I can scarcely give an opinion as to what effect a nomination of Judge McLean, by the Union Convention,¹ would have— I do not believe he would accept it; and if he did, that fact alone, I think, would shut him out of the Chicago Convention— If he were ten years younger he would be our best candidate—

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln"

Washington April 24, 1860.

HON. A. LINCOLN,

My Dear Sir, I am going to write you candidly & frankly my impressions in regard to the Presidency, for such I know is the way you would desire me to speak, & I shall hope in return to be put fully in possession of your views— First in regard to yourself—

My impression is as between you & Gov. Seward, if the contest should assume that shape, that he would most likely succeed— I will not go into calculation to show this, but I have talked it over with friends here & that seems to be the impression even of those who do not want Seward nominated— When urging your claims, I am almost always met with the saying— "if you are going to nominate a man of that stamp why not take Seward?" There seems to be a disposition in the public-mind to associate you together, from the fact, I suppose, that you have both

given expression to a similar sentiment in regard to the ultimate extinction of slavery—

It matters not whether there is any foundation for this or not, I am not arguing the matter, but simply stating what others say—

Second— Can Seward be elected if nominated? The impression here is among all except his warm friends that he can not— The delegations from Conn. & R. I. say he would lose both States, & so far as I know those from N. J., Pa., except Cameron, & Indiana express the same opinion in regard to their States, & I must confess the letters I am daily receiving from Central & South Ill. lead me to doubt if he could carry our State—

We shall certainly run a great risk if he is the nominee— Under such circumstances it seems to me clear that he should not be nominated—

3— The next question is can his nomination be prevented & if so how— The impression here is that Judge McLean is probably the only man who could succeed as against Seward. After Cameron he seems to be the choice of Pa. & I suppose Ohio would support him after Chase— Would our State go for him in the convention after you, & if nominated could he carry Ill.? There seems to be a good deal of feeling for Bates in Central & South Illinois; would the same men go for McLean if nominated? Of course you know McLean's age, infirmities & the objections which would be raised to him—

Bates, I do not think could get the nomination as against Seward— The Germans are opposed to him— Neither Pa., N. J. or Ohio could be carried for him entire as against Seward, nor do I suppose Ill. could, nor do I mean to say that these States would certainly go for McLean in such a contingency, but am giving impressions here—

Now I wish you to understand that I am for you first & foremost, want our State to send not only delegates instructed in your favor, but your friends who will stand by & nominate you if possible, never faltering unless you yourself shall so advise; but we are engaged in a great contest which ought not to be put to hazard from personal considerations in any quarter—

Of course Mr. McLean can only be taken up as a compromise Candidate— He would

¹ Held on May 9 and 10, 1860, nominated John Bell for the Presidency on the second ballot. Judge McLean received 21 votes on the first ballot.

have no votes to start with— From what I have written you will readily see, that I am inclined to favor this McLean movement, which is daily gaining strength & even now looks formidable; but I want to know your views— I have talked with my Republican colleagues, & they all agree that we may ultimately have to take McLean & that it would be very hazardous to take Seward.

My impression is that [if] McLean were nominated [he] would be elected— Pa. some of the members here say, would be sure for him by Fifty thousand, & carrying that State would doubtless elect him— I think there are half a dozen men whom we could elect, if they were nominated, but I do not see how their nomination is to be brought about.

[Not signed, but in Lyman Trumbull's autograph.]

"Springfield, April 29, 1860

"HON: L. TRUMBULL:

"*My dear Sir:* Yours of the 24th was duly received; and I have postponed answering it, hoping by the result at Charleston, to know who is to lead our adversaries, before writing—But Charleston hangs fire, and I wait no longer¹—

"As you request, I will be entirely frank — The taste *is* in my mouth a little; and this, no doubt, disqualifies me, to some extent, to form correct opinions. You may confidently rely, however, that by no advice or consent of mine, shall my pretensions be pressed to the point of endangering our common cause—

"Now, as to my opinions about the chances of others in Illinois—I think neither Seward² nor Bates³ can carry Illinois if Douglas shall be on the track; and that either of them can, if he shall not be— I rather think McLean could carry it with D. on or off—in other words, I think McLean is stronger in Illinois, taking all sections of it, than either S. or B; and I think S. the weakest of the three. I hear no objection to Mr. McLean, except his age⁴; but that objection seems to occur to every one; and it is possible it might leave him no stronger than the others— By the way,

if we should nominate him, how would we save to ourselves the chance of filling his vacancy in the Court? Have him hold on up to the moment of his inauguration? Would that course be no draw-back upon us in the canvass?

"Recurring to Illinois, we want something here quite as much as, and which is harder to get than, the electoral vote—the Legislature— And it is exactly in this point that Seward's nomination would be hard upon us. Suppose he should gain us a thousand votes in Winnebago, it would not compensate for the loss of fifty in Edgar—

"A word now for your own special benefit— You better write no letters which can possibly be distorted into opposition, or quasi opposition to me— There are men on the constant watch for such things out of which to prejudice my peculiar friends against you—

"While I have no more suspicion of you than I have of my best friend living, I am kept in a constant struggle against suggestions of this sort— I have hesitated some to write this paragraph, lest you should suspect I do it for my own benefit, and not for yours; but on reflection I conclude you will not suspect me—

"Let no eye but your own see this—not that there is anything wrong, or even ungenerous, in it; but it would be misconstrued—

"Your friend as ever

"A. Lincoln"

PRIVATE

"Springfield, May 1, 1860

"HON: L. TRUMBULL

"*Dear Sir:* In my last letter to you I believe I said I thought Mr. Seward would be weaker in Illinois than Mr. Bates— I write this to qualify the opinion so far as to say I think S. weaker than B. in our close Legislative districts; but probably not weaker taking the whole State over—

"We now understand that Douglas

¹ The National Democratic Convention met at Charleston, April 23, 1860, and adjourned May 3 to meet at Baltimore, June 18, having made no nominations. A large number of the delegates from the Southern States, having previously withdrawn, organized a convention that adjourned to meet at Richmond on June 11.

² William Henry Seward, Senator from New York, Lincoln's strongest opponent for the Presidential nomination, and later his Secretary of State.

³ Edward Bates of Missouri, appointed Attorney-General by Lincoln.

⁴ Judge McLean was then in his seventy-sixth year.

will be nominated to-day by what is left of the Charleston Convention—

"All parties here dislike it— Republicans and Danites,¹ that he should be nominated at all; and Doug. Dem's that he should not be nominated by an undivided Convention—

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln"

"Springfield, May 26, 1860

"HON. L. TRUMBULL:

"My dear Sir: I have received three letters from you since the nomination,² for all which I sincerely thank you— As you say, if we can not get our State up now, I do not see when we can—

"The nominations start well here, and everywhere else, so far as I have heard— We may have a back-set yet— Give my respects to the Republican Senators; and especially to Mr. Hamlin, Mr. Seward, Gen. Cameron, and Mr. Wade— Also to your good wife—

"Write again; and do not write so short letters as I do—

"Your friend, as ever

"A. Lincoln"

"Springfield, Ills. May 31, 1860

"HON. L. TRUMBULL

"My dear Sir: Yours of the 28th, inclosing that which I have carefully read, and now return, is received— Please say to Mr. Hamlin that my letter of acceptance is already written and forwarded to Mr. Ashmun,³ at Springfield, Mass; that I would send him, Mr. Hamlin, a copy, only that Mr. Ashmun, when here, sought and obtained a promise from me that I would furnish a copy to no one; that the letter is very short, and, I think, conflicts with none of Mr. Morey's suggestions, except that it may be published by Mr. Ashmun before the Baltimore Convention. Perhaps it would be best for Mr. Hamlin and yourself not to communicate the fact that the letter of acceptance is already written— I am glad to learn the

¹ Danites, a secret association of Mormons pledged to obey the dictates of their church; the name was popularly applied in Illinois to the faction of Administration Democrats who opposed Douglass.

² Lincoln was nominated for President at Chicago, May 18, 1860, and Hannibal Hamlin of Maine for Vice-President.

Philadelphia meeting had force enough to not be spoiled by the storm— I look with great interest for your letters now.

"Your friend as ever,

"A. Lincoln"

"Springfield, Ills. June 5, 1860

"HON. L. TRUMBULL

"My dear Sir: Yours of May 31, inclosing Judge Read's letter,⁴ is received—

"I see by the papers this morning, that Mr. Fillmore⁵ refuses to go with us. What do the New-Yorkers at Washington think of this? Gov. Reeder was here last evening direct from Pennsylvania— He is entirely confident of that State, and of the general result— I do not remember to have heard Gen. Cameron's opinion of Penn— Weed⁶ was here, and saw me; but he showed no signs whatever of the intriguer— He asked for nothing; and said N. Y. is safe, without condition.

"Remembering that Peter denied his Lord with an oath, after most solemnly protesting that he never would, I will not swear I will make no committals; but I do think I will not—

"Write me often— I look with great interest for your letters now.

"Yours as ever,

"A. Lincoln"

The following autographic document begins with a memorandum in Lyman Trumbull's handwriting, which we italicize to distinguish it from the remainder, which is in Lincoln's handwriting:

"Furnished by Mr. Lincoln & copied into my remarks to be made at the celebration at Springfield, Ill. Nov. 20, 1860"

"I have labored in, and for, the Republican organization with entire confidence that whenever it shall be in power, each and all of the States will be left in as complete control of their own affairs respectively, and at as perfect liberty to choose, and employ, their own means of protecting property, and preserving peace and

³ George Ashmun of Massachusetts, Chairman of the Republican National Convention.

⁴ Judge Read of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

⁵ Millard Fillmore the former President. Candidate for the Presidency in 1856 against Buchanan and Fremont.

⁶ Thurlow Weed, the New York journalist and politician, the staunch friend and supporter of Seward.

order within their respective limits, as they have ever been under any administration— Those who have voted for Mr. Lincoln, have expected, and still expect this; and they would not have voted for him had they expected otherwise— I regard it as extremely fortunate for the peace of the whole country, that this point, upon which the Republicans have been so long, and so persistently misrepresented, is now to be brought to a practical test, and placed beyond the possibility of doubt— Disunionists *per se*, are now in hot haste to get out of the Union, precisely because they perceive they can not, much longer, maintain apprehension among the Southern people that their homes, and firesides, and lives, are to be endangered by the action of the Federal Government— With such *'Now, or never'* is the maxim—

"I am rather glad of this military preparation in the South— It will enable the people the more easily to suppress any uprisings there, which their misrepresentations of purposes may have encouraged—"

PRIVATE, & CONFIDENTIAL

"Springfield, Ills. Dec. 10. 1860

"HON. L. TRUMBULL.

"*My dear Sir.* Let there be no compromise on the question of extending slavery— If there be, all our labor is lost, and, ere long, must be done again— The dangerous ground— that into which some of our friends have a hankering to run—is Pop. Sov— Have none of it— Stand firm. The tug has to come, & better now than any time hereafter ¹—

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln."

¹ Lincoln was elected November 6, 1860. Threats of secession of Southern States were rife, the people throughout the Northern and in many of the Southern States were anxiously striving to check the secession movement, offers of compromise were urged, many public meetings were held which favored liberal concessions. Reaction seemed to be setting in, and many who had helped to elect Lincoln seemed to repent; but whoever else was shaken, he was not.

² Benjamin F. Wade, Senator from Ohio, later pre-

CONFIDENTIAL

"Springfield, Ills. Dec. 17. 1860

"HON. LYMAN TRUMBULL

"*My dear Sir:* Yours inclosing Mr. Wade's ² letter, which I herewith return, is received—

"If any of our friends do prove false, and fix up a compromise on the territorial question, I am for fighting again—that is all— It is but repetition for me to say I am for an honest enforcement of the Constitution—fugitive slave clause included—

"Mr. Gilmer ³ of N. C. wrote me; and I answered confidentially, inclosing my letter to Gov. Corwin, to be delivered or not, as he might deem prudent— I now inclose you a copy of it—"

[The signature has been cut off—probably for an autograph-seeker]

"Springfield, Ills. Dec. 24, 1860

"HON. LYMAN TRUMBULL

"*My dear Sir* I expect to be able to offer Mr. Blair ⁴ a place in the cabinet; but I can not, as yet, be committed on the matter, to any extent whatever—

"Despatches have come here two days in succession, that the Forts in South Carolina will be surrendered by the order, or consent at least, of the President ⁵—

"I can scarcely believe this; but if it prove true, I will, if our friends at Washington concur, announce publicly at once that they are to be retaken after the inauguration— This will give the Union Men a rallying cry, and preparation will proceed somewhat on their side, as well as on the other—

"Yours as ever

"A. Lincoln."

siding officer of the Senate after Johnson's accession to the Presidency.

³ John A. Gilmer, member of Congress from North Carolina, had been Whig candidate for Governor, but was defeated. He was suggested for Lincoln's cabinet.

⁴ Montgomery Blair, subsequently Postmaster-General.

⁵ South Carolina passed its ordinance of secession, December 20, 1860.







